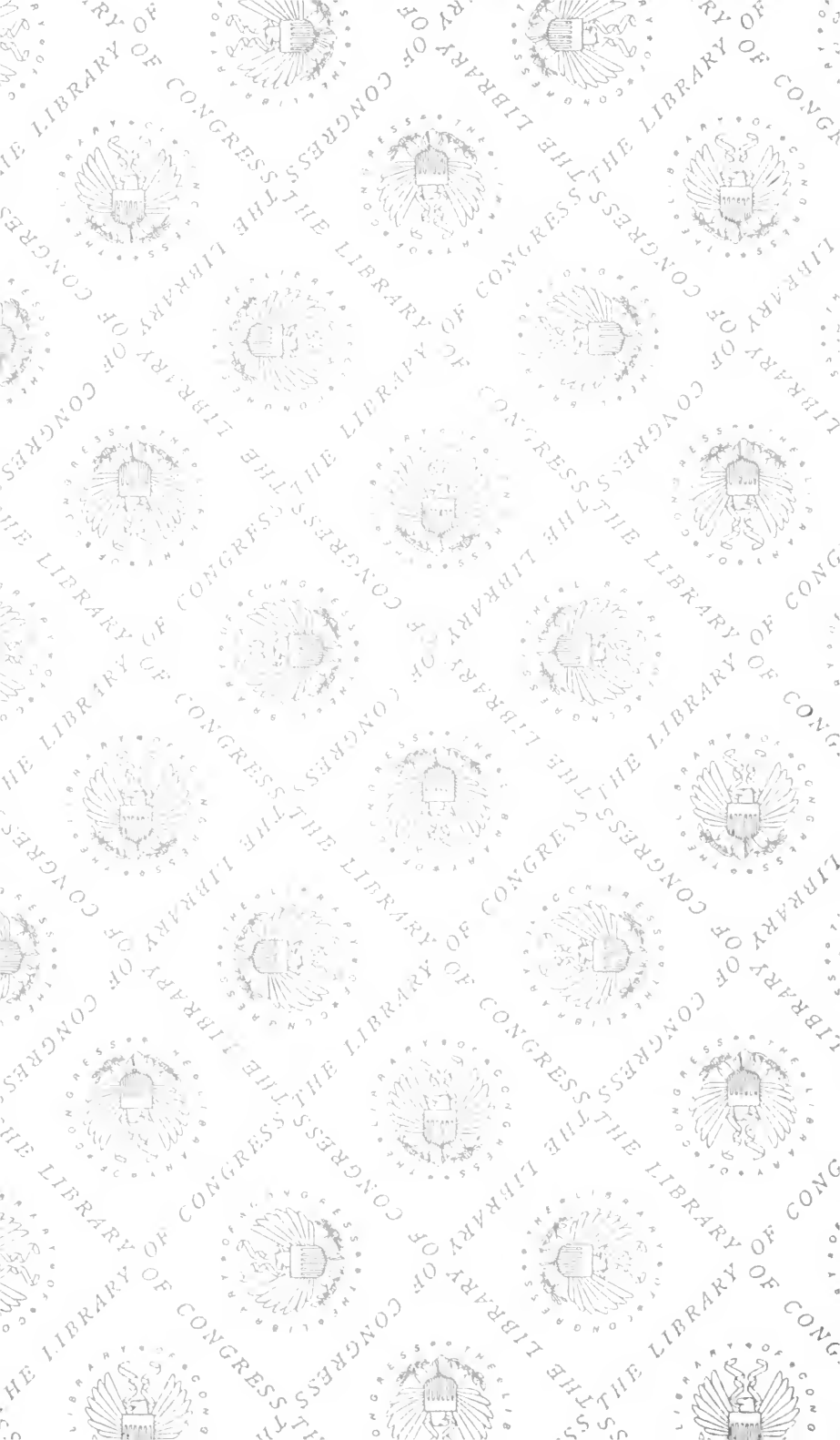
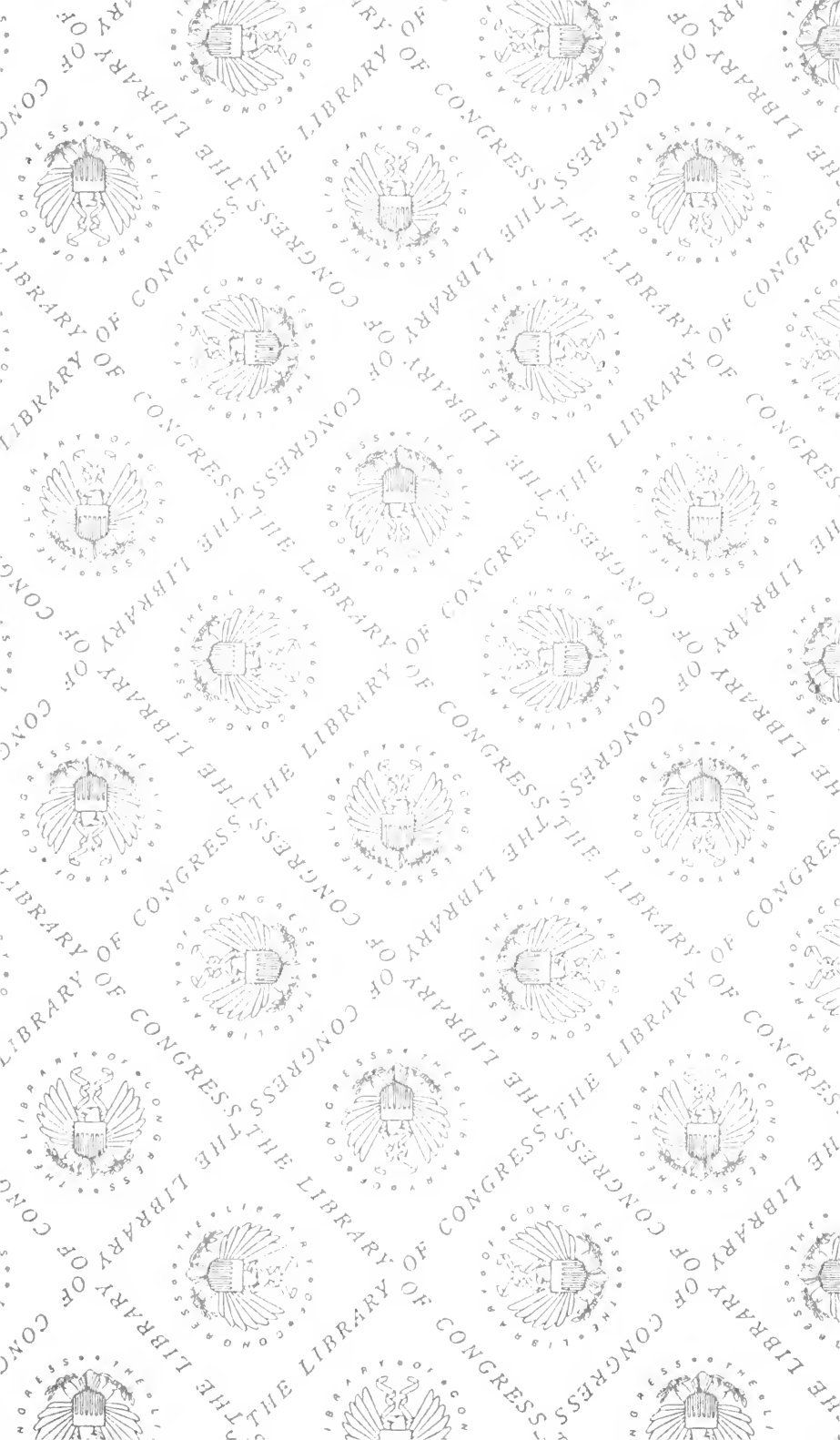


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Eighteen.











Eighteen.

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To E. E. M.

From E. E. M.

December 31, 1894.



Do you remember, Edith dear,
One Christmas long ago,
When first your tiny, busy hands
Learned patiently to sew?

And how you brought me, cherished close,
A pile of patchwork fair,
Whose dear, uneven stitches showed
The love in every square?

Time changes all, and here today
For birthday greeting true,
I bring with just as timid heart
My patchwork, dear, to you.

Of poet's art you may not find
One faint redeeming sign,
But take the meaning shining through,
The love in every line.



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EIGHTEEN.

When she's eighteen, a girl has wistful eyes,
That look for joy as some unwearied queen :
Yet deeper thoughts her untried heart surprise
When she's eighteen.

No sorrow that the world has ever seen
Can daunt the maid, who trustingly relies
On love and usefulness for years serene.

The blessedness of peace, that time defies,
May dawn in brave, sweet face and earnest mien,
Since life holds something more than smiles and sighs
When she's eighteen.

CHOICE.

The string o'erstretched breaks, and the music flies;
The string o'erslack is dumb, and music dies;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

NOR low nor high! My heart learned once that prayer,
That humble prayer, that asks the steady glow
Of moderation only; seeks to know
The strength of slow successes; fears to share
Ambitions sweet, tempting to heights more fair.
A simple life, attuned nor high nor low,
May gain a heaven, escape from bitter woe,
Nor need to greatly suffer, greatly dare.

Take back Thy gift of peace! I claim the smart
And ache of passion for a vision high!
Make me Thy instrument, and justify
This longing once Thy message to impart!
Awake one song to stir a hero's heart,
Then let the tense strings break, the music die!

IDEALS.

I think there's scarce a soul among us all
Who has not sometimes felt a glorious thrill
Of quick response to some inspired call
For earnest purpose and devoted will;

Who has not felt the heavenly life so real
That rising by this mortal life, God-given,
He might attain his loftiest ideal,
And prove his kinship to the saints in heaven.

Perhaps these moments measure souls aright
Despite the days when high aims seem less dear;
And when the great Hereafter dawns from night
It may be, that, with vision grown more clear,

We see at last, O keenest pang of sin!
Both what we are and what we might have been.

THE PRICE OF LOVE.

A fair, still life was mine before you came,
Filled with small joys and duties manifold;
Happy in thought of others, proud to hold
Its peace serene, untouched by breath of blame.
I did not know that any spoken name
Could make my heart beat faster; unfortold
Was this new power, by which my life you mould,
And this new love, which neither meant to claim.

Yet not for quiet of that crystal sphere
Would I exchange this sorrow, sweet as death!
Not for the peace that once I held most dear!
The heartbreak of this passion witnesseth
To birthpangs of a soul, and all the pain
Is Love's own price for everlasting gain.

LA PIA IN PURGATORY.

Thou piteous, pale ghost, whose haunted eyes
Haunt in their turn, like half-remembered dream,
Tell me the secret of thy grief-supreme,
Unchanging in the hope of Paradise.
No friends on earth hast thou to agonize
In prayer that Mary may thy debt redeem,
But, lonely in thy loveliness, dost seem
To know no kindred soul 'neath any skies.

“Forever I behold the earthly fate
No purgatorial pains have power to dim.
Maremma's poisoned air unlocked too late
The gateway from that life of secrets grim.
I learned the horror of a love grown hate
Waiting to die, waiting alone with him.”

A REAL POET.

Brave singer, who in golden rhymes hast caught
All sweet, strange fancies, such as poets know, —
The young delight of loving, and the slow
Sad prescience of death, that comes unsought,
The longing for new life, new love, new thought,
Or dreams of dear, dead faces, hid below
The turf, where only rosemary may grow, —
We praise thee for the beauty thou hast wrought.

Yet not alone for praise! Thy royal heart,
Stirred by the love of love, as none beside,
Beats in each line, and wakes an answering thrill.
We read the secret of thy gracious art
In thine own life, and hold with loving pride
The poet dear, the woman dearer still.

AN INTERPRETER.

Not only in the days of long ago
God's prophets spoke to man a heavenly tongue;
Nor through Hebraic halls alone have rung
Great words from hearts that burned with holy glow
The present vision of God's truth to show;
Careless of self, if thus the world were stung
To consciousness that He still lived among
The cares and fears His earth-born children know.

Still do those prophet voices speak today,
Widening horizons of our life and thought,
Linking a baby's blush, the tones that stay,
With all the wisdom sages ever taught,
Bidding us reverence in Christ's own way
The wondrous meaning of the mystic Ought.

JANUARY 17, 1886.

A ROUNDEL.

Others he saved ; himself he could not save.

The poet's heart breathed out a song so rare,
Its rapture bade all earthborn cares depart.
Men thought they read, revealed in beauty there,

The poet's heart.

Its words held naught of earthly sting or smart,
But touched with healing comfort all despair ;
In lonely lives it helped fresh blossoms start ;
To many a troubled soul it seemed like prayer,
And no one dreamed how vain its utmost art,
To still the weary thoughts that filled with care

The poet's heart.

NUSHKA.

A sunset sky, dropping its rose and gold
In magic tints upon the lake below;
A line of curving beach, where tiny waves
Make music in their ceaseless ebb and flow;
Above us wooded bluffs with treetops far,
And still beyond, in bluest blue, a star!
All this and love besides! we softly say,
While fades the light of Glencoe's perfect day
Into the moonlit hush of night away.

OF COURSE.

The sun was shining when my Love passed by,
Although from clouds of chill autumnal gray
The rain had fallen drearily all day
And sobbing winds moaned through the treetops high.
It seemed a dream, for afterwards the sky
Still lowered with clouds that would not break away ;
Nay, smile not thus, my friend, because I say
The sun was shining when my Love passed by.

That sudden gleam of sunlight, sweet and shy,
Was like my Love herself, who would not stay,
But changed at once November into May.
I know it true; your laughter I defy;
The sun was shining when my Love passed by.

IN JACKSON PARK.

A stupid little bat goes blundering by,
He knows not how to live, nor dares to die;
Fit comrades we, in truth, the bat and I.

At that poor broken wing needs must I sigh.
You thought that wings perhaps were meant to fly!
We make such sad mistakes, the bat and I.

O, blind-eyed little thing, I dare not try
To help you in your plight; we soared too high,
And now must bear our fate, the bat and I.

No flight for such as we, beneath free sky;
But broken wings and hearts may by-and-by
In some undreaming place forgotten lie.

LIFE AND DEATH.

O, the rapturous thrill of awaking
In the morning cool and gray,
When my pulses stir with rejoicing
For the gift of another day.
O, a day is too short for such chances
Of love and of service true,
With the glory of sunshine around me,
And my beautiful work to do.

But the dear day slips from my holding
And the chances come and go;
While I love and I work a little,
And I worry sometimes, you know.
Then the evening comes with its quiet,
Its dreams of the hours past,
And I put off my plans until morning
For I'm glad to sleep at last.

So my life grows rich with its meaning,
Until beauty and service combine,
And it claims me with power resistless,
It thrills me with longings divine.
Too brief are the years of our striving,
Far distant the brotherhood dream,
Yet we work with a courage unfailing,
And life holds a glory supreme.

But perhaps in the misty future
An hour of quiet may come,
When an evening hush may enfold me,
And each summoning voice be dumb;
I may sit perhaps in the stillness
And muse on the happy past;
Then say my few words of thanksgiving
And be willing to sleep at last.

AFTER DAY COMES NIGHT.

The evening comes again
To quiet every pain,
Enfolding us within her mantle gray, —
To still the jar and fret,
To hush each vain regret,
That lingers still around this busy day.

Give Thou to every breast,
Something of that sweet rest,
That sometimes comes with sense of duties done;
Let every thought of care,
All we must do or bear,
In quiet lie until tomorrow's sun.

Thou knowest what we are,
And how we wander far
From high ideals that once were bright and true;
The heart that then was strong
To meet and conquer wrong,
Forgets to ask or hope for visions new.

Only for strength we pray
To face another day
And recognize its blessings from above ;
But still where'er we turn,
This lesson we may learn,
That Duty's other name is always Love.

JUDGMENT DAY.

DIES IRAE ! DIES ILLA !

Not a sign is in the air,
Never trumpet gives the warning,
Earthquake shock nor wailing prayer.
Earth lies fair in summer sunshine,
Children's voices laugh in play,
Yet with thrill of strange awaking
Knows a soul its Judgment Day.

DIES IRAE ! DIES ILLA !

Yesterday is past and dead,
Memory of joy and sorrow,
All the longing, all the dread ;
Sense of wrong and useless waiting,
Dreams the heart would fain disown,
Love that only knew denial,
Hope that lived on hope alone.

DIES IRAE ! DIES ILLA !

All the doubt and fear and pain
Vanish in the awful silence,
Balancing of loss and gain.
What is now the world's approval,
Life's attainment, life's disgrace?
In the stillness of the Judgment
Soul and God are face to face.

ONE WOMAN'S WORK.

“ Who having little yet hath all.”

A narrow sphere ! how can you call it so ?
Three pairs of baby eyes look up in mine,
And seem the gates through which a light divine
Transfigures all my life with tenderest glow.

Because I cannot paint with artist skill
The changing colors of the sea or sky, —
Because I cannot write of visions high,
And move you all with pain or joy at will, —

Because to learning's shrine no gifts I bring,
Nor take a foremost stand for woman's cause, —
Because I trust unquestioning the laws,
That bring us snow in winter, birds in spring, —

You think my life is circumscribed and cold
In what should make it helpful, rich and strong.
Ah, friend, these happy days are none too long
For all the loving duties that they hold.

Nor has the art you love been all denied,
For loveliest pictures every day I see
In childhood's careless grace and movements free,
From waking morn till dreamy eventide.

My Edith's braids, now brown, now golden bright,
Imprison tints no artist's brush has known;
The baby's deep blue eyes, that meet my own,
In living beauty mock all painted light.

Nor do you know, my friend, the critics bold
We story-tellers in the children find, —
What store of wisdom and of wit combined
We need to point a moral new or old.

And in reforms are we not learning late
A still, small voice need not be all in vain?
These childish hands may bring the greater gain
If I am willing now to simply wait.

And what in science or philosophy
Can pass in interest the baby heart
Seeking in untried ways to take its part
For good or ill in life's great mystery?

God help us mothers all to live aright,
And may our homes all truth and love enfold,
Since life for us no loftier aims can hold
Than leading little children in the light.

DEDICATION HYMN.

Like stars upon a troubled sea
Shine out the altars fair,
Where longings of the centuries
Have voiced themselves in prayer.
A guide to tempted, wandering hearts,
A strength in sorrow's hour,
A peace within the common lives
They touched with holy power.

We seek the good those altars held,
Yet read their message clear,
To loyally receive the light
God sends us now and here.
Within these walls may worship fill
Our waiting souls anew,
A present help within our lives
To make them pure and true!

Eternal Life, whose Love divine
Enfolds us each and all,
We know no other truth than Thine,
We heed no other call.
O may we serve in thought and deed
Thy kingdom yet to be,
When Truth and Righteousness and Love
Shall lead all souls to Thee.

ALL SOULS' CHURCH, CHICAGO.
OCTOBER 12, 1886.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

Father, I bring to Thee
This life that from Thine own its being drew,
All I have been, all aspirations new,
All I may ever be.

I lay at Thy dear feet
My past with all its hopes and cares and needs,
Its purposes that failed like broken reeds,
Its record incomplete.

This tangled web of mine
Wherein there is so little good or fair
May yet, if trusted to Thy love and care,
Take on a light divine.

The consciousness of wrong,
That through the long, long night maintained its sway,
Has vanished in the light of breaking day
And left instead a song.

Now I begin to see
How even my mistakes, my faults and sins
Have led me where Thy comforting begins
And shown the way to Thee.

My future too I bring.
May it be purified by Thy dear love
Although the sacred baptism from above
Be one of suffering !

What harms can ever come
To us who know Thy love can have no end ?
Thou ledest us, an ever-present Friend,
Unto the light of Home.

How all these wrongs we see
Can lead to right, I do not understand ;
But ere the daylight breaks I clasp Thy hand
And trust myself to Thee.

A GOODNIGHT SONG.

My life is like a little boat
Upon a mighty river;
It rocks and sways and keeps afloat,
Though swift the current ever.

Asking not to know the way,
Wishing not to turn or stay,
Floating ever night and day
Onward to the ocean.

Sometimes the skies are soft and fair,
And bright the summer weather,
When loving voices fill the air,
And boats glide on together.

Sometimes the skies are dark as night,
And not a star shines o'er me;
It's often hard to steer aright,
When rocks are just before me.

And yet I know the Love, that guides
The boats upon the river,
Will keep me safe, whate'er betides,
Forever and forever.

Asking not to know the way,
Wishing not to turn or stay,
Floating ever night and day
Onward to the ocean.

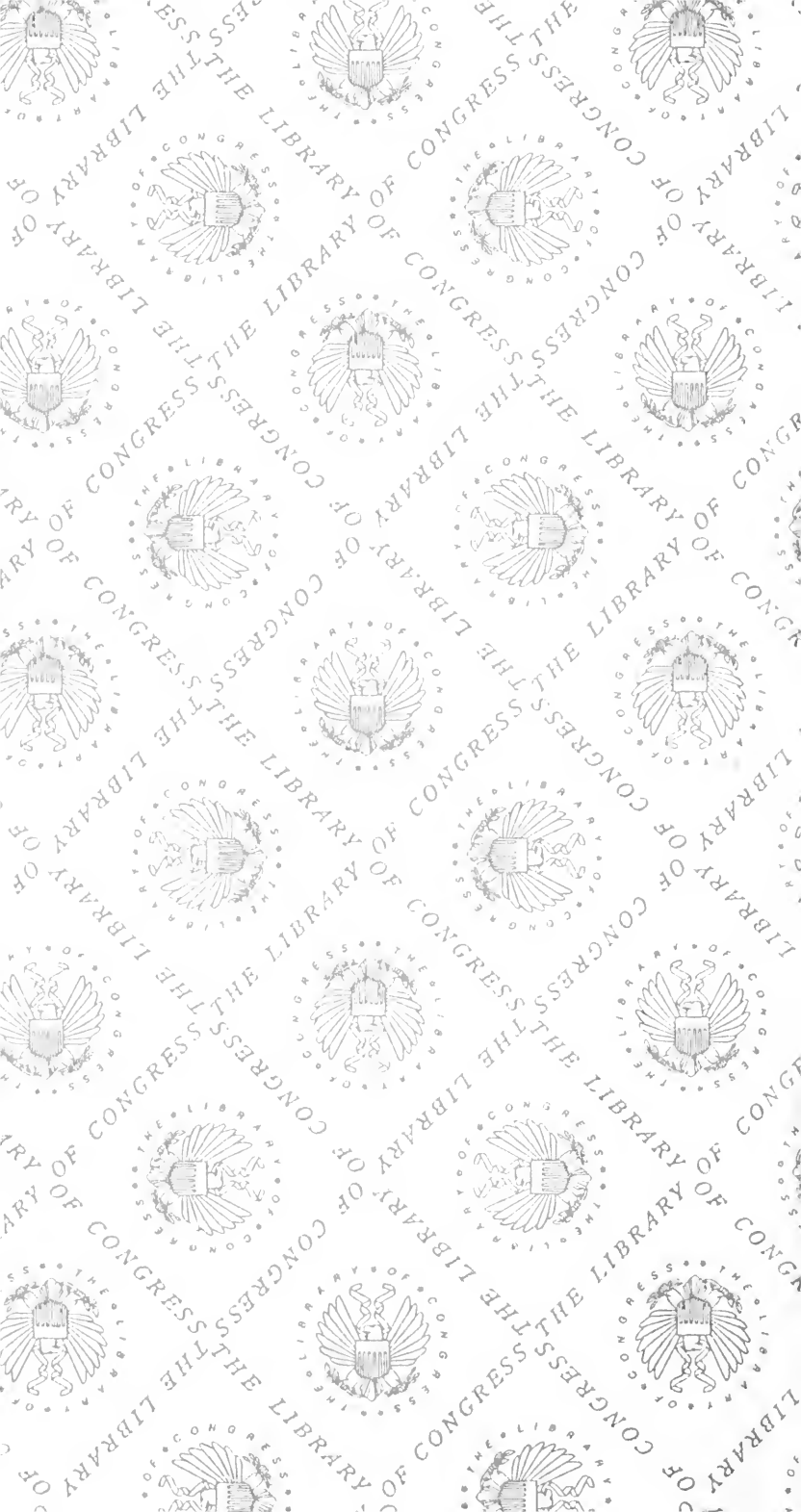
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